MAR 26 1918

The Common Cause

The Organ of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

VOL. IX., No. 465.] FRIDAY MARCH 8, 1918. [PRICE 1D.
Registered as a Newspaper.

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[The National Union does not hold itself responsible for opinions expressed in signed articles.]

Notes and News.

The Future of "The Common Cause."

ALMOST every week THE COMMON CAUSE prints an appeal for some object dear to the heart of women. This week we appeal for our own future. It is our most earnest desire to be of the greatest possible use to the N.U.W.S.S. and to the women's movement. At present our usefulness is limited by lack of means. We urge everyone who has ever found THE COMMON CAUSE useful in the past, and everyone who hopes that it may be useful in the future, to contribute to our £2,000 fund!

Women Teachers.

On Tuesday the London County Council was the scene of an event of very great importance to women. It will be recalled that in January was published the Report of the Departmental Committee on the scales of salary for teachers in elementary schools. This Reconstruction Committee, whose duty it was to deliberate in the spirit of awakening enlightenment which by universal agreement must be applied to the problems of employment after the war, deliberately refused to consider the arguments either for or against equal pay for equal work, and recommended that women's salaries should be on a lower scale than those of men, for the sole reason that it is, in fact, at present possible to get women's work at a cheaper rate than men's. This report is of special importance to us, as this is the first Reconstruction Committee to present recommendations on the pay of women, and its blindness to the recent rapid advance of public opinion is a signal warning to us that the enemy is still powerfully entrenched, and that the Reform Bill, though a victory, does not mark by a long way the end of the battle. We shall return to it at greater length in another number; meanwhile, it is interesting to observe its first results.

The Education Sub-Committee of the London County Council has also had before it recently the consideration of a new scale of salaries for its elementary school teachers. This Sub-Committee completed its task a week or so ago, and was no doubt greatly influenced by the Report of the Departmental Committee referred to above. Its recommendations included considerable increases in the scales of salary for men teachers, while as for the women teachers, it not only left them very much worse off in comparison with the men than they were before, but even in many cases actually reduced the existing rates of pay. Nominal increases were, indeed, to be given, but in return the War Bonus was cut off, so that, while some women received net increases of about 4d. a year, others were positively to get less than at present. Last Tuesday was the day when this Report was to be considered by the London County Council itself, and there was little time for any steps to be taken. But the women teachers did marvels. Hundreds of letters were written to Councillors and to the Press, canvassing was actively undertaken, and, finally, a petition was organised and signed, within a very few days, by over ten thousand women teachers in the London area. The scene at the meeting of the Council was quite an event for that body. Outside stood some thousands of their women teachers, a present reminder that the days of sex inequality are numbered; within, the Education Sub-Committee had a stormy time. The Report was riddled by speaker after speaker, Miss Wallas, Miss Susan Lawrence, and Mr. Gosling being conspicuous in the attack. When finally a vote was taken, a bare half-dozen were found to support it, many of the offending Sub-Committee having slunk out in the course of the proceedings.

The Report was referred back for reconsideration, and the Sub-Committee, having refused to receive it back, it was totally rejected. A notable victory was thus won. It remains to be seen what will happen next, and whether the Education Sub-Committee has now learnt its lesson.

A Women Candidate for the Senate of the U.S.A.

We are deeply interested to learn that Miss Anna Martin, of Nevada, who has been for four years Chairman of the American National Women's Party, is a candidate for the seat in the United States Senate left vacant by the death of Mr. F. Newlands. We earnestly wish her success.

Important to Women Voters.

Every woman who is qualified to vote should see that her name is duly included in the list of Parliamentary voters. This list will be posted outside all churches and chapels, and at post-offices and municipal buildings, on June 15th. It will be kept up for fourteen days, so that everyone will have an opportunity of going and looking for her own name. If it is not there, she should apply before June 29th for a claim form. In England and Wales this form can be obtained from the Clerk of the Town or District Council; in Ireland from the Clerk of the Crown or Peace. The following is a brief summary of the qualifications of women voters under the Representation of the People Act. A woman can vote if she is:—

1. The occupier, or one of two joint occupiers, of a house of flat, either as owner or tenant, however low the rent.
2. The occupier, either as owner or tenant, of any land, shop, or building of a yearly value of £5 or over for each occupier.
3. A lodger in a room which has been taken unfurnished.
4. The wife of a man who is the occupier of land or premises as above.
5. A University Graduate (Oxford and Cambridge women have a special qualification).
6. Otherwise qualified, but away from home on naval or military service.

It must be noted, however, that in order to get on to the new register, it is necessary to have occupied premises from October 15th, 1917, to April 15th, 1918.

THE NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES

APPEALS FOR

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FOR ITS PAPER

The COMMON CAUSE

The present is a great opportunity for a Woman's paper.

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To the Editor, "The Common Cause," Evelyn House, 62, Oxford Street, W. 1.

I enclose £ : s. d. as my subscription to the Appeal Fund.

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SUPPORT OUR APPEALS and mention THE COMMON CAUSE when sending donations.

The Legal Profession.

On Tuesday, February 19th, Lord Buckmaster introduced into the House of Lords the Bill opening the profession of solicitors to women. On March 5th it came up for its Second Reading, and, after an interesting speech from Lord Buckmaster, it was carried without a division.

Considerable discussion has arisen as to whether the barristers' profession should not, at the same time, be opened, but legal opinion is divided as to the advisability of effecting this reform by Parliamentary action. The Inns of Court have at present the right of admitting or excluding whom they choose, and the disqualification of women rests not upon statutory ineligibility, but upon the jealousy and narrow-mindedness of the benchers. As Mr. Samuel Garrett, the President of the Law Society, truly says, "The barristers and the taxi-drivers alone resist the admission of women to their job," and it is possible that without an Act of Parliament they may yet change their procedure, though the unanimous rejection by the Middle Temple of Miss Normanton's recent application is discouraging. In the meantime, if the Solicitors Bill passes through its remaining stages in the Lords, and receives enough support in the Commons to assure the Government that it is likely to pass there, we have Mr. Bonar Law's word that time shall be made for it this session, and this much-needed reform is now actually in sight.

We understand that a similar Bill for Scotland will be introduced into the Lords at a very early date, so that it may pass through its later stages with the English Bill.

"Maisons Tolérees" in France.

We publish on page 625 a report of the important meeting on this subject, held by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene on March 1st.

Mrs. Fawcett, as President of the N.U.W.S.S., has written to the Press as follows:

"May I add my voice to that of the Dean of Lincoln on this subject? If Mr. Macpherson is correctly reported, he repeated in his speech on Monday every exploded fallacy upon which the discredited policy of the C.D. Acts was founded. He spoke of 'the security which a registered woman gave,' and was not sure 'that it was such a bad thing to have certain houses in which women were registered and kept clean.' I say nothing for the moment of the degrading sex slavery which this implies, though, of course, I feel this deeply, even passionately. But Mr. Macpherson's words state that a security can be given which the evidence goes to show cannot be given. The countries which have had the system in operation for the longest time are riddled through and through by venereal disease, and its prevalence is largely caused by persuading tempted men that a security can be given which cannot be given. This policy, therefore, tends to spread the race poison which it is desired to destroy. The Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, after long and careful enquiry, and taking evidence from experts from our own and other countries, reported against the C.D. Acts from the hygienic point of view, and pointed out that a great improvement as regards venereal diseases had taken place in the Navy and Army since their repeal. It is well known that in addition to their recommendation of the provision of free treatment, they also recommended that the young should be taught that to lead a chaste life was the only certain way to avoid infection. I hope that both men and women will demand that these houses should be put out of bounds. The evil is both moral and physical, and must be fought with moral and physical weapons."

Meanwhile, the Dean of Lincoln continues the fight, and appeals to enfranchised women of all parties to help in it.

The N.U.W.S.S. Executive Committee has informed the Societies of the facts of the case and invited them to take action. We have no doubt whatever of the response.

No Security.

We welcome the following resolution which has been passed unanimously by the Executive Committee of the National Union of Women Workers:

"That, in view of the public attention now directed to the question of prophylaxis, this committee desires to urge the necessity of providing early and effective treatment for venereal disease even before the onset of the symptoms, but strongly deprecates the provision of prophylactic outfits before sexual indulgence.

"The committee urges this in the best interests of the community, not only from the physical, but also from the moral standpoint."

It is essential that, while those who have contracted the disease are encouraged to seek cure, nobody should be misled into thinking that he can be provided beforehand with an antidote which will secure him against the effects of immorality. There is *no* security, and the sooner all those concerned realise it the better for them and for all.

Equal Justice.

In the Court of Criminal Appeal, last Friday, Mr. Justice Darling commented on the practice which has been adopted in certain Courts of treating soldiers who have committed crimes quite differently from civilians guilty of the same crimes. He said that the subject had been discussed at a recent meeting of Judges of the King's Bench Division, and that it had been recognised that the practice had done much harm, and ought to be discouraged. "Each case must be judged on its own merits, and on nothing else," said Mr. Darling. These remarks have an interesting bearing on some recent inequalities of justice, which we have commented on in The Common Cause.

Irish Suffragists and the Future.

News reaches us from Ireland that the Belfast Suffrage Society has become the Women's Political League, (headquarters Belfast). The programme of the League embraces those problems of maternity and child welfare, housing and education reform, which must be dealt with if real reconstruction is to be possible in Ireland. In connection with the housing problem, it may be noted that while on every side there is talk of a very large extension of shipyard work in the city, and in one case a firm is reported to be prepared to spend over a million in this direction, no real attempt has been made to grapple with the housing difficulties such an extension of work would involve. The present supply of dwelling houses is entirely inadequate, and it is difficult to see in what way the needs of the additional thousands of workers required by these extension schemes would be met. There is, further, the question of school accommodation. Two years ago it was officially reported that the school accommodation fell short of the actual minimum requirements by 8,000. This latter difficulty will not be eased by a large increase in the number of working-class families.

The programme of the League also includes the principle of equal pay for equal work, irrespective of sex. There is ample scope for work in this direction, as is evident from one case alone, where a local firm are employing women in a certain class of munition work at one-third the wages usually given to men, the output being equal.

The Women's Political League does not intend to carry on its work in any spirit of isolation. Concerted action among men's organisations in Ireland may or may not be possible, but there are very many questions on which Irishwomen agree, and on which joint action will be possible. On February 21st, the representatives of every existing Suffrage organisation in Ireland met in conference in Dublin to consider possibilities of such joint action, and arrangements were made to further work in this direction. In its own district, the Women's Political League has already initiated and carried on work in co-operation with other women's organisations, and this will probably be extended in the near future. As one of the speakers at the annual meeting of the League said: "Men have not always worked with a single eye to the nation's good. They have sometimes played the game of politics as if human beings were merely pawns. The great gift of the vote has come to us consecrated by blood and tears, it must be used as something sacred, giving us enormous responsibility and a consecration."

Women Motor Drivers.

We hear that some of the motor schools advertising short courses of instruction in driving and running repairs do not always give a satisfactory training. It may interest some of our readers to know that the Training Department of Women's Service, 58, Victoria Street, S.W., recommends reliable trainings, and that it will be glad to have particulars from any students who, in response to advertisements, have had unsatisfactory trainings.

Unmarried Mothers and their Children.

By Mrs. Edwin Gray.

A strong public opinion is gradually being formed in favour of securing some improvement in the lot of unmarried mothers and their children, of finding some means of reducing the high death rate amongst illegitimate children, and at the same time obtaining for these mothers such assistance as is vital to their health and well-being. At present many of them are in as helpless and pitiable a condition as can well be imagined. There is no need to enlarge upon it, as it is well known to all, even to those who do not actually come into contact with them. The "Report on the Physical Welfare of Mothers and Children," issued by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, describes the need in the following passages :—

"Illegitimacy throws its shadows over both mother and child; the mortality amongst unmarried mothers is higher than amongst those whose infants are born in the comfort and protection which wedlock usually affords; the number of miscarriages is higher in the case of unmarried than married mothers, whilst it is notorious that the mortality amongst illegitimate infants is double that of the legitimate. The claims of the illegitimate child are very insistent. Prejudice, which led many maternity hospitals to refuse assistance to the unmarried mother, appears to be fast disappearing, but extreme difficulties are encountered in finding suitable places for the infants, and greater provision is needed for them.

"However great the perils which beset the infant born under ordinary circumstances, mortality returns show that the risks to the illegitimate infant are practically doubled. In 1914, 37,329 babies were born out of wedlock in this country, England and Wales, their rate of mortality was 207, the rate amongst legitimate children being 100. In almost every case of illegitimacy the mother is in need of some assistance, and the interests of each illegitimate infant require to be carefully watched."

The war has accentuated all the difficulties of the unmarried mother. The supply of foster-mothers has seriously diminished everywhere, especially in London and the larger cities. Where suitable women are still available for this purpose, the weekly sum asked is so high, that, in spite of increased wages, few mothers can afford to pay it and live decently themselves. Admirable as are many of the voluntary agencies, they are totally inadequate to the need, whether in their geographical distribution, in the form of help offered, or in the amount of accommodation.

The subject naturally divides itself into two parts, the legal position and what changes are needed therein, and the question of how best to provide adequate care. It is not proposed to discuss the latter in this article.

In "The Law of Parent and Child," by R. S. Deans, the position of the illegitimate child is thus described. "The English law has always looked with great disfavour on illegitimate children. A bastard is *filius nullius*. He has no relations except descendants. He cannot be legitimated by the subsequent marriage of his parents. At common law he could have no guardian, but the mother was held entitled to the custody even as against the putative father."

Legal decisions have modified the common law, and have held that the mother has a *primâ facie* right to the custody of her illegitimate infant up to the age of fourteen. The courts have held that the mother had an absolute right to control the religious education of her child. The Custody of Children Act, 1891, which gives the Court, on the application of a parent, power to decide which home is the best for the child does not apply to illegitimate children. As long as an illegitimate child is of the "age of nurture" (*i.e.*, fourteen) the Courts will support the mother's right to the custody of it. When an illegitimate child reaches the age of fourteen, if he be a boy, he is entitled to choose his place of abode, but if a girl not until she is sixteen.

An illegitimate child has no rights of succession *ab intesto* to either parent; nor is he, on the other hand, bound to maintain them under the Poor Laws. It is interesting to note that under the Roman Law the natural tie was legally recognised to a considerable extent, the father being bound to maintain children, they in return owing him "reverence." An illegitimate child was bound to maintain his mother, but not his father. The doctrine of *legitimatio per subsequens matrimonium*, formulated by Constantine, was regarded with favour by the Church, and introduced by Canonists into most European countries. In Scotland the Roman Law is followed more closely than in England, and the marriage of the parents legitimates the child.

A mother is responsible for her illegitimate child; if she neglects to maintain it, leaving it chargeable to the Guardians, she may be proceeded against. She can be prosecuted for concealment of birth, for ill-treating, or for neglecting her child.

She can obtain from the father the expenses of her confinement and a weekly sum not exceeding 5s. for its maintenance up to the age of sixteen, or she can compound for a lump sum. Proceedings can be commenced either before or within twelve months of the birth by summons against the alleged father. By the Affiliation Orders Act, 1914, the Court, on making an affiliation order, must direct, unless the mother for good reason otherwise wishes, that the monies payable shall be paid to a collecting officer appointed by the Court on behalf of the mother. There is, however, no obligation on that officer to enforce payments in case of default. Under the Bastardy Laws Amendment Act, 1872, the Guardians have power to obtain an affiliation order in respect of an illegitimate child chargeable to them; but no payments shall be recoverable except in respect of the time during which the child is actually in receipt of relief. On ceasing to be chargeable, the mother may apply for an affiliation order under the Act of 1872, and the order obtained by the Guardians shall be *primâ facie* evidence that the man upon whom the order is made is the father of the child.

If the mother has herself obtained an order, and her child becomes chargeable, a relieving officer may be appointed by two justices to receive payments due under the Bastardy Order during the period of chargeability. The appointment can only be for one year, but is renewable.

Under the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1844, any two justices may, on the death of the mother or of her being of unsound mind or in prison, appoint some person to have the custody of the child, who may recover the money, so long as the child is not chargeable to the Guardians.

The English law takes no cognisance of the adoption of children. Parents, the father in the case of children born in wedlock, the mother in the case of an illegitimate child, cannot legally divest themselves of their responsibility for their offspring.

As regards suggestions for amending the law, I propose to point out some of the most obvious needs without touching on more fundamental changes, which, even if desirable, would be difficult of attainment in this country.

There should be no maximum amount in the maintenance order, which should be fixed according to the financial position of the father.

Where an affiliation order has been obtained by the Guardians, it should ensure for the benefit of the mother when she ceases to be chargeable, without the need of further action on her part. The Affiliation Orders Act, 1914, above referred to, should provide that the duty of recovering payments under the order should be thrown on the collecting officer, without any reference or expense to the mother.

Subsequent marriage of the parents should legitimate the child as in Scottish law.

The law should be altered to provide that an illegitimate child shall inherit from its mother on her dying intestate as if it were legitimate offspring. While this might not affect very many cases, it would raise the status of the illegitimate child and give it legal relations.

In view of the large number of children, legitimate and illegitimate that are being adopted, if we may judge from advertisements, it is desirable that the principle of adoption be recognised by the law with the object of securing the continued responsibility of the foster parents.

In 1913, 37,909 illegitimate children were born in England and Wales. In that year only 8,582 affiliation orders were applied for, and only 6,914 were made. These figures, as well as the experience of those in close touch, point to the great ignorance which prevails as to the law, and as to the steps to be taken by the mothers, and especially by prospective mothers, to secure their rights. It seems therefore very important that there should be some statutory official committee, probably appointed by the Health Committees of the County and Borough Councils, composed of members of the committee and of co-opted representatives of voluntary associations in their areas, whose duty it would be to give information and advice, and generally to watch over and secure the welfare of unmarried mothers and their children.

Will the Endowment of Motherhood Tend to Lower Men's Wages?

The complexity of the factors which determine a rise or a fall in wage-rates is so great that no exact statement of the effect which endowment will have on wages is possible. But it is possible to show that endowment would affect more than one of the factors which determine wages, and that, on balance, it would probably do more to raise than to lower wage-rates in its immediate effects, while its ultimate effects would undoubtedly tend to a general advance in standard rates of pay.

The argument used by those who believe that endowment would reduce men's wages is, at first sight, convincing. "You have shown," they say, "that men's wages are higher than women's because men, generally speaking, have families to support. If you relieve men of their family burdens, you sweep away the whole justification for men's present wages, and their wages must inevitably fall." It is useless to reply that the various ways in which men's wages have been helped in the past—maternity benefit, free education, medical attendance, &c.—have not reduced men's wages, for while small grants-in-aid might have no practical influence, such large grants as would be involved in the endowment of motherhood might have a very serious effect. We must therefore consider to what extent State subsidies to families might, in the abstract, tend to lower men's wages, and we must see whether other factors would, in practice, counterbalance any tendency of this kind.

The validity of the male wage-earner's argument rests on the principle that his wages are determined by the average cost of subsistence (which at present includes the cost of maintaining a family) at the current standard of living. If part of the cost of subsistence for a large section of labour were met by direct State payments, this section of labour would be willing to accept lower rates of wages, and down wages in general would go. Abstractly stated in this form, the argument is sound, as we can readily see if we think of the effect that the introduction into England of a large body of Chinese or coolie labour would have. But if we think of a concrete scheme of endowment in relation to the actual conditions which govern English labour, we may come to a totally different conclusion. A scheme of endowment would probably propose that a weekly allowance should be given to mothers with children under five, and also to children until they reach the age of fifteen. The weekly payment in respect of children is relatively small, and it is only those men with children under five, because of the relatively high weekly allowance paid to their wives, who might theoretically be willing to accept lower wages.

The number of men so affected would be about two million in the wage-earning classes; but these individuals—about one-sixth of the total number of male wage-earners—would not be a separate class of black-leg labour available as a body at lower wages. On the contrary, they would be scattered through every industry throughout the country, and, on the average, would represent only one-sixth of the employees in any one branch of employment. The remaining five-sixths of the wage-earners would vigorously oppose any attempt to cut rates of wages; and there is such solidarity among the workers that it is very doubtful if, in practice, the men whose families were drawing endowment would have the slightest effect in weakening the policy of the unions, even if, as separate individuals, they might in theory be inclined to accept lower wages. In the conditions which govern English labour, the bargaining power of the block is the important factor. As a matter of actual practice in the past, the men with families have always been the weakest section, just because their families suffered most from a stoppage of earnings; and if the families of wage-earners were certain of at least physiological subsistence during industrial conflicts, the call on strike funds would not be so great, and the bargaining power of the unions as a whole would be made far stronger. It may be objected that endowment would at any rate have a bad effect on wages in the casual and badly organised trades, even though the considerations which have just been advanced might hold good in the case of the more highly organised trades. The reply to this objection is that a regular and more adequate family income would give to the workers in the badly organised trades far better chances to organise, and their efforts to secure higher wages would no longer be hampered by the knowledge that their families would suffer from a temporary stoppage of earnings. And, as endowment would certainly raise the standard of comfort in their homes, it would give men in low-paid trades a better background for their efforts, it would open their eyes to the possibility of even higher standards of living, and it would encourage them to strive for a general improvement in their conditions. The fact is that under the present system of making children dependent on the earnings of the individual father, children are the Achilles' heel of labour in its struggle for better conditions; and endowment, by making the lives and health of children no longer dependent on the speedy solution of an industrial conflict, would immeasurably strengthen the bargaining power of labour in all trades without distinction.

On these grounds, therefore, it seems possible to say that the endowment of motherhood would not necessarily have a depressing effect on men's wages. This conclusion is strengthened by other considerations, which are left out of account by those who think of endowment only in its relation to the average cost of subsistence to the married worker. For one of the immediate results of endowment would be to raise the standard of living in working-class homes, especially where there are large families. A large part of the additional family income which endowment would bring would be used to provide more food, more clothing, more tolerable conditions for the children; and in so far as the family standard of living was raised, the costs of subsistence would be increased, and the tendency of endowment to make the married man willing to accept lower wages would be still further restricted.

Apart from this immediate result of endowment, after the scheme had been working for some time the adult working classes would be reinforced each year by boys and girls who had been brought up in much better conditions than formerly, and whose average standard of living would be far higher than that of the present workers; and this again would be a factor making for higher wages.

But although we have admitted that the average cost of living is one of the factors which determine wages, it is at least doubtful whether this factor is relatively of much importance. In wages as in everything else our two old economic friends, Supply and Demand, are probably the most important factors in determining any change in current rates of wages; and we cannot get an adequate idea of the effect which endowment will have on wages until we have examined its effects on the supply of and the demand for labour.

In the first place, the endowment of motherhood will not add a single person to the ranks of the male wage-earners. On the other hand it will undoubtedly reduce the number of married women whom poverty now forces to neglect their homes and enter industry in order to add a little to their inadequate family income. We may safely conclude, therefore, that endowment will to some extent reduce the total supply of labour; and, in so far as this takes place, wages will tend to rise, not fall. A rise in wages is all the more likely because the class of labour that will be withdrawn is just the class which at present takes the lowest paid employment. If we remember that endowment, besides reducing the number of married women seeking employment, would also tend to bring women's wages generally up to the level of men's,* we see that it would be positively beneficial to men's wages, as it would do away with the serious effects which women's competition at lower rates has undoubtedly had on men's wages in the past.

With regard to the demand for labour, although it is exceedingly difficult to forecast what the conditions will be after the war, it is possible to say that endowment will do a great deal to steady and possibly to increase the demand for labour. The endowment of motherhood would mean that families whose sole income in the past has been the often irregular and inadequate wages of the father would then have a more regular and a higher income to spend on the necessaries of life. Family consumption throughout the nation would be steadied; there would be a continuous and increasing volume of demand for labour in all the trades that minister to the needs of the family and these changes would have a beneficial effect on men's wages.

We see, therefore, that there are good grounds for thinking that the endowment of motherhood may, in its final result, actually tend to raise men's wages; and that in any case the belief that it would inevitably lower men's wages is not based on a full consideration of all the factors involved. Apart from the purely economic considerations that have been put forward, there is one factor which, in the actual conditions after the war, would probably overshadow all other tendencies, and make any reduction in men's wages practically impossible. It is well known that wage-rates sometimes rise, but seldom fall. Difficult as it is in ordinary times to reduce wages, it will be even more

* See Miss E. F. Rathbone's article in last week's COMMON CAUSE.

difficult after the war, when the workers' demand for better conditions and a higher standard of living will be practically irresistible, especially as it will be supported by the general current of public opinion. Any attempt to lower wages immediately after the war would savour too much of a challenge to revolution, and is not likely to be made.

In its more distant effects—through the improved health of the coming generations of workers, through the increased comfort and security of their homes—the endowment of motherhood would undoubtedly improve the quality and the outlook of the workers. The increased productivity of the workers which this will bring about will, in turn, make it possible for industry to bear the higher wages which will be demanded in order to keep pace with the rising standard of living. The workers' standard of living will no longer be kept down by the large class of those who, under the present system, are brought up in wretched conditions, often below the level of even physiological subsistence, and come on to the labour market without the vitality and the ambition which are so necessary to a human being who is to play a useful part in a civilised State. Advocates of the endowment of motherhood do not advance their scheme solely because of the benefits which it will bring to women, but because they believe that it will lead to a higher standard of living throughout the nation, and this higher standard will bring in its train higher wages and better conditions for men as well as better conditions for women and children.

Emile Burns.

The Laws Against Solicitation.

By Sir Charles Tarring, J.P.

The administration of these laws is in many respects so abnormal as to deserve careful consideration on the part of earnest workers in the cause of a higher standard of morality.

In the first place they are in practice enforced against one part only of the community, viz., women; and of them for the most part against the poorer and more ignorant. In the next place, the act which is the object of the solicitation is not itself an offence against the criminal law. Why and how the invitation to do what is not criminal can itself be regarded and dealt with as criminal calls for explanation. Further, the person solicited never or rarely appears in support of the charge; the evidence to prove the charge is, as a rule, given only by the police. The result is that important safeguards against the oppressive action of the criminal law are absent. No party presents himself to complain of injury; he cannot therefore be examined or cross-examined to bring out the whole facts, to show complicity or provocation or other extenuating circumstances; in most cases there is no one who has been injured. The only witnesses are officials interested in securing a conviction to justify their own action.

This being so, some courageous persons have demanded the total abolition of the laws against solicitation. The only reason for their existence would seem to be a desire to protect men against their own weakness or folly—an anxiety in marked contrast to the refusal to protect young girls between 16 and 18 against betrayal. It has been said these laws are needed in the interests of public order and decency. Let it then be clearly stated once for all that there are other laws than the laws against solicitation which amply provide for the preservation of public order and the repression of public indecency—on the part of men as well as women.

Women are sometimes proceeded against under one of these "other laws" in order to convict them for solicitation. This opens another chapter in the discussion.

The laws against solicitation apply only to "common prostitutes." To avoid the necessity of proving that the defendant is a common prostitute, she is sometimes charged with insulting behaviour likely to lead to a breach of the peace [see Metropolitan Police Act, s. 54 (13)], and evidence of solicitation is given in proof of the charge. But the difficulty is more fundamental than is at first apparent. There is no legal definition of "common prostitute." Where, therefore, the defendant is charged as such, and proof is called for (as is not always the case), it is impossible to say exactly what or how much must be proved, or what any particular magistrate may demand before he will convict.

Some say that prostitutes are a well-known class, and definition is needless. Prostitutes are not a well-known class. The establishment of such a class by the Contagious Diseases Acts fifty years ago was one of the principal causes of the successful agitation against those Acts, since, a woman once registered in the class, there was little or no hope of her escape to a respectable life. Some women may be called prostitutes from a more or less well-grounded belief in their unchastity; but that is a very different thing from using the word as a legal term drawing after it serious legal consequences. A writer* has lately described five types of unchastity among women, all of which few moralists would characterise as prostitution.

It is the old difficulty of drawing a line and then deciding on which side of the line the enquiree is. In some cases there may be no doubt; but in many cases there is—grave doubt; and a wrong determination is fraught with irreparable wrong. The police are not the right persons either to draw the line or to say on which side of it a woman's conduct brings her. No depreciation of that body of men is intended; their general character is beyond dispute. But they are, by the nature of their occupation, suspicious of evil; and to put them into the position of having to decide, without guidance, the question—prostitute or not—is detrimental to them, and highly perilous to women. It is one of the cardinal principles of our criminal law, of the utmost importance to our liberties, that an accused person should know exactly the nature of the accusation and what facts he has to answer.

But if a legal definition of prostitution were promulgated, the proof would be almost impossible, at all events of the kind insisted upon by our criminal practice in other cases. It would imply calling men to testify to their own shame, to carefully concealed doings in their private life—an intolerable procedure—which brings us to recognise that the moral law in its fulness cannot be enforced by legal process. It is enforceable in all its extent and purity only by the conscience, and the Unseen, Who sees the inmost thoughts of a man.

One of the surprises in the present campaign for the protection of young women has been the cry back to traditional views on this subject. It has been seriously argued in justification of certain legislative proposals that prostitution is a trade, and therefore may properly be put under restrictions or regulations like other trades. Now prostitution is not a trade. A trade is the exchange of commodities or services to the mutual advantage of both parties, enforceable by law. The law refuses to recognise contracts based upon immoral considerations. The word has been loosely applied to the doings of unchaste women merely to vilify them. And the regulation of women believed to be unchaste was the central principle of the Contagious Diseases Acts, repealed thirty years ago, and lately repudiated by the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases.

Women in the Engineering Trades.

IV.—Organisation.

The total number of women now employed in the engineering trades as well over 600,000 and of these it is safe to say that not more than a quarter are organised into Trade Unions.

The men in the trade are divided into a very great number of different Unions, of which the most important is the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, with a membership of over 270,000. Besides this, the Amalgamated Toolmakers' Society, the United Machine Workers' Association, the Scientific Instrument Makers, the Coppersmiths, the Sheet Metal Workers, and countless others, cater for men in the engineering trades, and the big General Labourers' Unions also include them.

The women in the trade are not admitted to any of the skilled or specialised Unions, and are only catered for by the National Federation of Women Workers, the Workers' Union, and the Dockers' Union, all of which are General Labourers' Unions, not confined to workers of one degree of skill or on one particular kind of process. The numbers of women enrolled in these organisations are unknown. The National Federation of Women Workers includes something over 50,000, but the female membership of the other two Unions is difficult to determine and fluctuates enormously from time to time.

One special Union for skilled women has come into existence in the Society of Women Welders, numbering as yet only 500, but rapidly extending.

* In the *Shield* for December, 1917, p. 402.

This Society maintains the principle that its members should receive the fully-skilled tradesman's rate. Its position as a sex-craft Union is obviously temporary, but its principles and its freedom from the necessity of compromise give it a particular importance among the general forces competing in the trade, and its history may yet be sensational.

The most considerable factor in any collective bargaining that has been done for engineering women has been the National Federation of Women Workers. This Union consists of women only, and at present the great majority of its members are employed in the engineering trades. Before the war its membership was about 3,000, and women not catered for by any other recognised Union were eligible for membership. The constitution still extends its membership to these miscellaneous classes of women workers, and further provides that when any other recognised Union opens its doors to women, the members within the Federation shall be transferred to that Union. In practice, however, it has become in the last few years almost an engineering Union, though it retains the character of a General Labourers' Union in so far as it still admits other workers, and caters for all classes of engineering indiscriminately.

From this description of the position of organised women in the trades, it is clear that whatever force their organisation has towards raising wages must be, in the main, directed to the less skilled workers. The women doing the whole or part of a fully-skilled tradesman's job, are in a minority in all these Unions, and are, naturally, less well protected. The need of the unskilled and sweated woman is much larger, and her progress must rightly be their first concern. An examination of the Orders and interpretations of Orders granted to women in the last few years shows clearly that, while the minimum rates have been steadily if all too slowly advancing, the higher rates have not been in practice specially protected. Indeed, the only Trade Union organisations actively pressing for the fulfilment of the principle of equal pay for equal work have been the big men's Unions which contain no women, and the unofficial support given by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers to the National Federation of Women Workers has been the cause of the insertion of the principle in the Government Orders and the mainspring of every subsequent attempt to put it into effect.

From the point of view of men Trade Unionists, not only the standard of living of the women but the rate-cutting of the men is of importance; it is clearly in the interests of the skilled tradesmen to use their organisation to protect their own rates, and this they cannot efficiently do until they admit into their own ranks the women whose competition causes the danger. It is easy to see why they do not do it. They still cling to the hope that they can turn women out, neck and crop, when the war is over, and if the women, for whose interests they were responsible, were their own members, they could neither make nor enforce this demand. On the other hand, so long as they do not admit women, they cannot protect the rates, since without their strength the women cannot hope to organise in time. While they wait upon the horns of this dilemma, women are left with very inadequate protection, neglected and forgotten in all the men's bargains, pulled hither and thither by the cross currents of industrial unionism, advancing only by minute compromises, and uncertain of where they are going. The women at the top are held back by the women at the bottom, and the women at the bottom are not pulled up by the women at the top. The principles of Trade Unionism and the benefits of collective bargaining are not understood among them, and they come into industry and wander helplessly and ignorantly to and fro, not knowing whether the men are their friends or their enemies, a prey to intimidation and victimisation, and a danger to the whole industrial system. The only remedy that can possibly be effective before the crisis of demobilisation is upon us is the admission of women to the men's Unions. The difficulties of separate organisations among women are enormous; increased by their low wages and their uncertain position in the trade, their lack of experience, their youth, and their total ignorance. If the Trade Union leaders really intend to put upon the women themselves the whole burden of their organisation from the beginning, withholding from them the experience and the organisation that they have themselves acquired, they must expect a period of some fifty years before the industrial woman ceases to be a menace and a danger. But whether they open or close their doors, it is for those who believe in the freedom of women to help in their organisation by money, by sympathy, and by personal service.

Ray Strachey.

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"The Common Cause."

In the course of the discussions which have raged in these columns during the past few weeks concerning the future of the National Union, nothing, curiously enough, has been said about the future of The Common Cause. And yet, it is difficult to think about the National Union as having a future at all without the active assistance of its most vital internal organ. True, there can hardly exist any individual member of the National Union who has not at some time or another roundly abused our paper for its dullness, its invective, its pacifism, its jingoism, its colourlessness, its shameless political partisanship; yet at the same time there can hardly exist any member who has not in the course of years developed a kind of grudging affection for this elusive descendant of "Women's Franchise," to whom we have been able to turn in the days of Press boycott and misrepresentation for authentic accounts of meetings and riots, deputations and processions. In its pages we have been able to pick something like personal acquaintance with leaders of the Suffrage movement scattered over the face of the United Kingdom; by its information columns we have been happily reminded that though own own local society might be dead or comatose, sister societies of happier political atmosphere were putting us to shame. Without doubt it has been useful to us—to say the least of it—in the past, not only as an internal organ, but in crises of our history as an external organ too. There have been times when we have urged it passionately out into the world, chalked its name on walls and pavements, forced it upon the congregations of our own and other people's meetings, sold it hour after hour at the corners of streets, abandoned it face upwards in railway carriages and public places, trusted it as our most efficient agent for enlightening a pig-headed public, if not as to who we were, at least as to who we weren't.

But to-day, with this beginning of a new chapter in National Union history, begins also a new chapter in the history of The Common Cause; and the parting of the ways for the one must mean the parting of the ways for the other. Undoubtedly, the danger which looms ahead of this journalistic venture of ours is the danger of being overlooked in the general ferment of readjustment, of being allowed to pursue an indefinite course, of losing its vitality and dissipating its energy, like those land-locked rivers of Central Asia which trickle into a hundred futile little streams and lose themselves in the desert, neither knowing nor caring the way to the sea. There may be members of the National Union heartless enough to regret such a consummation only as being less desirable than a more speedy and dignified decease.

In the writer's opinion, however, any kind of death for The Common Cause, whether violent or natural, would be a real tragedy, if not for the journalistic world, at least for the National Union, whatever may be the future of that body. On one point at least members appear to be firmly agreed: the National Union must live. Indeed, the Council agenda contains no single resolution even suggesting its possible dissolution. But recent discussions in the pages of The Common Cause itself, not to mention the tangle of schemes and resolutions which comprise the Council agenda, suggest that very decided opinions are afloat as to the development of future policy. There are, on the one hand, those who see the National Union of the future as a real live, active, democratic organisation of women workers, keeping a vigilant eye on all women's interests, pressing for the widening of women's opportunities in every direction, educating and organising large bodies of progressive women voters, and working directly through a large network of National Union Women's Citizen Associations all over the country. On the other hand, there are those who feel that such a programme would mean a dissipation of force—that the "equality formula," as it has been called, should be applied as the test of what the National Union should stand for, and that the whole organisation should develop as a fighting feminist organisation, widening the old Suffrage front so as to cover not merely franchise inequality, but legal, social, and administrative discrimination against women as such, wherever it may happen to exist.

Obviously then, The Common Cause, if it is going to serve the National Union of the future, as it has served the National Union of the past, will have to adapt itself, broadly, to one of two policies. In the first eventuality it will probably have to serve as a popular organ of women's interests—dispensing information

and inspiration to a multitude of Women's Citizen Associations, and at the same time voicing the views of progressive enfranchised women for the world at large. In such a capacity it would meet no real competitor, it would provide such a popular organ for women as should have been provided years ago, and in so doing it would fill an otherwise gaping void. For the second eventuality, it would serve very much the same purpose, though its subject matter might tend to centre round a smaller group of subjects and deal with them more technically, its propaganda to represent a more compact body of opinion. And under the second plan of campaign it might to a greater extent turn its eyes inwards, serving more as a dispenser of information and headquarters' news to organs of propaganda all over the country. Here, again, it would meet no real competitor, and fill what would otherwise be a gaping void.

But, in either case, THE COMMON CAUSE has a supreme new function—so long, that is to say, as the National Union keeps its flag flying, and continues to represent groups of public-spirited and progressive women in every locality. It must serve, under the new conditions, as a weathercock to political parties showing the way of the winds which blow over the heads of six million or so women voters. Party committees in search of candidates, party leaders in search of programmes must look to THE COMMON CAUSE for suggestions as to their way of wooing. And, if the measure of THE COMMON CAUSE's success in this venture is the measure of the National Union's importance as a leader and organiser of women's opinion, it is also the measure of its own effective journalism; and that is why its development is of such very special moment at this opening of Chapter Two.

The whole question is, however, a tangled one; for effective journalism means, to a large extent, well-paid journalism—a new departure for THE COMMON CAUSE; and well-paid journalism means a large circulation and the lucrative advertisement sheets which a large circulation brings. But this same large circulation in its turn requires not merely the devotion of every National Union member as a regular subscriber, but sufficient effective journalism to stimulate such devotion, and beyond it to appeal to an uninitiated public. The affair has on the face of it the sinister appearance of a vicious circle. On examination, however, we find, if not a vulnerable point in the circle, at least a double-headed instrument for making one. The circle can presumably be broken, if sufficient energy is expended on it, by a sudden access of devotion on the part of National Union subscribers, whose interest has lapsed plus a sudden access of lavish expenditure on the part of those who see in THE COMMON CAUSE an indispensable weapon in the National Union armoury. That done, the outside circulation should take care of itself. It will take care of itself if we are generous, and give it a big enough chance.

MARY STOCKS.

Equal Pay for Equal Work.

Miss Rathbone, in her extremely interesting article on "The Endowment of Motherhood" conveys the impression, and in fact, says in so many words, that the demand of women for equal pay with that given to men for the same work is not an equitable demand. This contention cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. What I am going to say, however, must not in any way be taken as an attack on the endowment of motherhood, a proposal which I very strongly support. If I seek to counter Miss Rathbone, it is only that I think it wrong to advocate one desirable principle by the denial of another.

Miss Rathbone enumerates four reasons why women receive less pay than men; of these some are really causes of the practice, but I hope to show that none of them justify it, as Miss Rathbone would have us believe.

Her first reason is that women have a lower standard of living than men. This is really too paradoxical, and until Miss Rathbone enlarges on the theme I shall continue to believe that a low standard of living is the result, and not the cause of low wages. Or are we to understand that Miss Rathbone holds that women do naturally need, and should therefore be given, less food, warmth, rest, leisure, and comfort than men doing the same work? This, unfortunately, is what many employers contend; they find that a woman can be got to put up with a standard which organised men reject, and proceed to argue that as she is content to accept these conditions any higher rate of pay is unjustifiable; they fail to see that she is not "content" but "compelled" to accept the bad conditions, and that her acceptance of them cannot possibly justify the sweating which enforced them. This employer's argument is so circular that it would seem useless to enlarge on it; but unfortunately it is precisely on this argument, and on no other, that the Departmental Committee on the Salaries of Women Teachers in elementary schools have based their recommendation that women should be paid less than men for the same work. It would be disappointing to find they had Miss Rathbone's support.

Her second reason why women are paid less than men is that women are less well organised. This is true enough, but it provides no justification. Lack of organisation is a reason—it is even the main reason—why women are in fact less well paid than men, but it is, of course, no reason at all why they should be.

Thirdly, women have a shorter industrial life than men, leaving it for marriage and for the task of rearing the next generation. But this is a reason we cannot accept wholesale. In the majority of trades a young fresh worker is a positive advantage, and it is only in those occupations which demand a long training and a high degree of technical proficiency that a shorter industrial life is a justification for a lower wage. And even there the argument is not altogether borne out by facts. Women doctors and women teachers are no less valuable than men, and women doctors, at least receive the same fees without question. Obviously however if women at the same rates of pay are of less value than men in any occupation they will not be employed in it, and this will afford a sure and certain test of this argument; and I believe that if we were to apply it we should find that there were not a dozen occupations in which it would hold good.

Fourthly, men have families to support and women have not. Miss Rathbone confines her arguments almost entirely to this question of the family wage, and it deserves careful consideration. The first point to notice is that it is only *very broadly speaking* that it is true to say that paying men more than women meets the difficulty. According to the present system wages have to pay for the maintenance not only of the worker but also of all his dependants, and among dependants the most important are the children. Wives, in the ordinary course, can hardly be classed as whole dependants, since they give in exchange for their keep a service which a bachelor has to pay for, but children during the years before they begin to earn money are of course a serious burden upon the wage-earner.

No scientific way has yet been devised for meeting the inequalities of this system. A rough and ready way, as Miss Rathbone says, has been evolved. Any reasonable person would have supposed that such a rough and ready expedient would have been found by giving higher pay to all workers with dependants in proportion to the burden of their dependance. If a still rougher method were required, and all dependants except children were neglected it would seem obvious that the people to get the higher pay would be the married men. If a line had to be drawn surely it could have been drawn there. But where has it actually been drawn? As usual it has been a sex line, the advantages and the pay falling on the men's side, and the injustice upon the women's. Single men, on this system have been overpaid because of their married brothers; widows and women with dependants underpaid because of their married brothers, and our rough-and-ready line perpetuates the old false notion that a woman's life and work are of less value than that of a man.

The war has shown us many things. It has shown that married men and unmarried men can be treated differently as regards national service; it has shown us that dependants can be provided for by separation allowances; it has shown us the value of a separate income in the hands of a wife, and it has shown us that women can do work that no one but Suffragists dreamed they could do. Let us still have faith. Let us ask for what we want and we shall get it; and by all means let us take the aid to equal pay that Miss Rathbone offers us, in the endowment of motherhood.

And to these ends the first great step is organisation. The history of Trade Unionism shows the way very clearly, and women have begun to follow it. We who believe, must help them. We must not stand apart and say they have no right to an equal wage because they are not getting it, but rather we must come forward with all the help and all the strength that we have, to fight the battle with the industrial woman and to secure for her organisation, training, opportunity and an equal wage.

OLIVER STRACHEY.

SERBIAN WOMEN TO ENGLISHWOMEN.

Message from La Ligue Nationale des Femmes Serbes to the International Women's Suffrage Alliance.

"The progress accomplished by women of England by the election law, giving the right of vote to about six million women, has caused great joy in the circles of the National League of Serbian women. Our League is firmly convinced that, thanks to this precedent of the English legislation, Serbia, as a democratic country, and by the very character of its people, will not be long in following the example of her great Ally, and will give thereby more efficacious means to Serbian women for the final victory of the Allies, and the realisation of principles which they have proclaimed.

"Serbian women pay homage to the English Women's Party for their clear view of the principle of justice and liberty: in reality, Serbia is not fighting only for her restoration, but, in the first place, to set free her sons—Serbians, Croatians, and Slovenes—from the yoke of the Austro-Magyar-Bulgarians, allies and accomplices of the Germans.

"Serbian women are profoundly touched by the faithful vow publicly taken by British women voters on behalf of Serbia and Belgium, and they wish to send them hereby their deepest gratitude.

"Considering that the victory of the feminist idea in England is at the same time a victory over the common enemy, the National League of Serbian Women sends her most cordial and patriotic greetings to the British Women's Party."

Correspondence.

[*Letters for publication should be received not later than Monday.*]

ENDOWMENT OF MATERNITY.

Madam,—I was much interested to read in last week's Common Cause the article in which Miss Rathbone exposed in such masterly fashion the essential injustice of the *unqualified* claim made by some women for "equal wages for equal work." I gather that Miss Rathbone agrees with the claim if associated with one for the State Endowment of Maternity. May I ask Miss Rathbone if she understands by this State Endowment a scheme for *graded* payments according to social status? It is an idea, I think, which would never be tolerated in a democratic state; but if this endowment is to be "a flat rate," one inequality is removed merely to create another. Lest I should be misunderstood, I will quote a concrete example, that of a professional man, say, the headmaster of a secondary school under an urban council. To certain narrowly logical minds, the present state of affairs, under which such a master receives a salary of, say, £600 or £700, and the head mistress of the corresponding girls' school, having similar qualifications and doing similar work, is paid, say, £300 or £400, is intolerably unfair. But supposing under "equal wages" each of these gets £500, where does equality come in? If the headmaster, to suppose an average case, has a wife and four children, and receives, in consideration of their maintenance, a State endowment assessed at the same rate as that of the man who brings the coals to his back-door, surely the inequality, as between these two teachers, would then be greater than before.

If we are candid, shall we not admit that once the principle of "equality" is admitted as the basis in questions of remuneration there is no stopping-place till we come to State-socialism. Is there a consensus of opinion, even amongst progressive people, as to this consummation being one "devoutly to be wished"? Is there not rather a widespread feeling that in pursuing the idea of equality we are but "following wandering fires"?

In my opinion, the question is not ripe for voting upon in the Council about to be held. There are other proposed solutions of the same problem which have not, any more than the solution which Miss Rathbone favours, been "well-aired." There is the plan of a universal minimum wage, with a scheme for providing that every wife shall receive a fixed share of her husband's earnings as her right. And other suggested solutions, for the whole matter is beset with difficulties, unperceived, alas! as is too often the case, by the enthusiastic banner-bearers in the cause of "equal wages." To my mind, the passing of any resolution on the question at our forthcoming Council meetings would be a regrettable instance of political precipitancy. Emma Common.

NATIONAL KITCHENS.

Madam,—One more word, please, on National Kitchens. On February 26th, punctually to time (though the men concerned were late with their gas and their motor-car), the Kensington National Kitchen was opened, and began to serve the attendant customers. A few minutes later I had the good fortune to purchase my lunch at one of the distributing centres — including vegetable pie (perfect pastry) 4d., and roast potatoes 1d. Everything was sold out yesterday (1,175 portions)—and no wonder. To-day I have had an admirable lunch, soup 1d., fish cake 2d., Yorkshire pudding 2d., boiled onions 1d.—total 6d. Not a few middle-class people have already had the sense to turn up.

The Kitchen is at King's College, Women's Department, Campden Hill Road. The whole thing is run by women, and the distinguished Dean, Dr. Janet Lane Clayton, to whom, and to whose students we owe it, was selling tickets at one distributing centre herself this morning. Other women, please copy. This is national and racial service of the first order. C. W. Saleeby.

THE CHOICE OF A NAME.

Madam,—Popular catch-words are not always true. Sometimes they are even glaringly false. An example of such an untrue truism is the saying "What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Names of people usually do not signify much, for the practical reason that a baby has to be named before it has developed any individual characteristics (except, of course, in the imagination of its mother or its nurse), and so it is a mere fluke if the name given it happens to fit its adult personality.

But an institution or a society is usually called by a name which is intended to indicate its object or scope, and a bad choice may have a disastrous effect on its prospects. A descriptive name which does not describe or describes wrongly is as mischievous as a sign-post which points in the wrong direction. On the other hand, a well chosen name, like Homocea, "touches the spot" it raises at once in the mind of the hearer just the group of ideas which are appropriate to the subject-matter.

But a good name may do something more than describe; it may become a battle-cry; it may inspire and stimulate; it may become so dear to those who use it that the very sound of it causes a glow or a thrill.

It follows that of all the important decisions that the Council has to make next week, there is none more important than its choice of the future name of the National Union. It will always remain "the National Union." As to that we all seem agreed. But National Union of what? The Agenda offers a wide choice.

To the Conservative-minded among us (and all of us have our moods of Conservatism) there is no doubt a considerable temptation to leave our old name unchanged. Apart from the sentimental reasons which appeal to us all, it would mean such an economy in letter paper and badges. But before yielding to those temptations, let us just imagine to ourselves the task of the future organisers and workers of the Union, whose duty it will be to start new societies and to extend and raise funds for old ones.

"For the Blankhampton Women's Suffrage Society? But what do you want with a Suffrage Society *now*? Haven't six million women got the vote, and do you really expect that you can work for a further extension, however desirable it may be, *now*. I would rather keep my money or my time for objects of more immediate importance." And then the organisers will begin a lengthy explanation of all the other objects that the Society is to work for. Would it not be better to choose a name which suggests at once the truth—that there is a whole field of effort yet untilled; that the vote is not a trophy to lay upon the mantel-piece, but a sword which we mean to use and to use at once.

There is much to be said for all the other titles that have been suggested. "Enfranchisement" is a grand word; a word of much wider significance than "Suffrage," since it signifies a freeing from bonds, not merely the "suffragium" or vote which is the right of the freedman. But is that fact sufficiently understood? Has not the word "enfranchisement" been so long used in connection with the suffrage movement that to most women it seems almost a synonym for it? "Women's Interests," perhaps, suggests rather too much that women are playing for their own hand, not for the "common cause." "Equal Citizenship" is a fine idea, and if the Chinley scheme is adopted, which practically turns our societies into associations of women citizens, it would be the natural title to adopt. But if the Council chooses the scheme put forward by the Executive Committee, the name might cause confusion between our societies and the Associations of Women Citizens.

The group of titles which include the word "liberty" or "liberties" seem to embody best the idea enshrined in the scheme of the Executive, and to many of us the very words "liberty" and "liberties" are a trumpet call. There are, surely, no finer words in the whole English language. X.

THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL UNION.

Madam,—I thank Miss Rathbone for her courteous explanation of the reasons why she wants the societies of the National Union "not to *be* Women Citizens' Associations, but only to *form* them." I think, however, that her whole conception betrays a too exclusive absorption in the case of the great towns containing a number of more or less overlapping societies for enforcing the woman's point of view. The vast majority of our societies, I take it, are, on the contrary, the only organisations of the kind in their districts, and the co-operation scheme is for that reason wholly inapplicable; while in a number of other cases they are so much the most active organisations in their districts that the co-operation of the others will bring them little or no effective help. For both these classes the obligation to form organisations other than themselves for the women citizens' work can mean nothing but the piling up of needless and cumbersome machinery.

Where effective Women Citizens' Associations already exist, no one, as I said the other day, can desire to interfere. It may be conceded, too, that where active societies, other than our own, desire to take part in the formation of these associations they should be encouraged to do so. But we should have freedom to judge the situation in each centre on its merits, and to take on the work directly through our existing societies in the overwhelming majority of cases where there is obviously nothing to be gained by doing otherwise. Miss Rathbone says our societies in most towns are not strong enough to carry on this work single-handed. I should rather say that our societies in most towns are not strong enough to carry on two organisations when one organisation will do just as well. Some of our leaders in London and in the great towns, accustomed to membership of this joint committee and that auxiliary section formed by a score of jostling societies for particular ramifications of their work, seem unable to realise the bewildering effect of this multiplication of machinery upon the rank-and-file and its utter unsuitability at least to the smaller towns.

I think Miss Rathbone tries to make her argument about the advancedness of our societies' members and the backwardness of the members of the proposed Associations carry much more than it will bear. I fancy that the members of both will be much of a muchness—neither very advanced nor very backward—and that any difference there might be would, at any rate, be insufficient to warrant their separation (intrinsically undesirable as such separation is in itself).

Miss Rathbone makes play with Mrs. Thoday's claim of all life as the sphere of interest of our societies, yet the claim was a legitimate rejoinder to Miss Rathbone's original *homo sum* adaptation. But the

Chinley formula is defined in a quite compassable form when it is made by Mrs. Thoday to embrace any subject on which women, as women, have a special point of view, or of which women, as women, realise the importance more than men. The equality formula is utterly arbitrary, and it is not correct to represent it as covering the interests of the Union in the past. In the past (as in the present agenda), in ventilating matters outside the franchise, what we have all along been trying to present to the world is just the "woman's point of view"—nothing more and nothing less. It is not we who are seeking to enlarge, but Miss Rathbone and her friends who are seeking to limit, the present scope of the Union's activities.

Geo. G. Armstrong.

Manchester. February 2nd, 1918.

Madam,—As Chairman of a small N.U.W.S. Society, may I say a few words about the Chinley scheme, as I have heard it suggested it would, if carried, make things easier for these small societies? The work of the pioneer in a "small" locality must be laborious—great therefore her or his honour if he does it staunchly. But does the true pioneer want to have his path made smooth if the principle for which he lives is endangered thereby? The answer is obvious, and it only remains to enquire whether the Chinley scheme would, in fact, however little such a result is intended, endanger the principle, call it feminism, equality, freedom for women, or what not, but which binds together those men and women, those "happy few," who, having put their heads to the "enfranchisement of women," will never look back till it is accomplished, fully accomplished.

"Chinley" says in effect, though not in intention, to a small society, if you find your task of upholding the play of feminism too hard, you may turn aside and take up a more popular cause. For example, the local magistrates are excellent fellows, good landlords and good neighbours, why worry about some abstract principle demanding women magistrates; or the local M.P. pays you marked attention as a constituent, why let your imagination play round a future House of Commons wherein shall sit a Mrs. Fawcett or a Maude Royden by the side of a Mr. Macpherson or a Mr. Arnold Ward? It is no longer necessary to possess a pilgrim soul under the expansive ægis of the new N.U., you may have a pound day for the Children's Home, or, for food is at once a universally popular preoccupation and essentially the interest of the "loaf giver," you may have done the latest thing in "pudding ladies" and at once your society, far from languishing under popular disapproval, may be assured of a *succès fou*.

Or again, the Vicar's wife runs the "Daughters of the Empire" league and looks to your society to support her, or contrariwise, your chief subscriber is a Quaker and hates conscription, and what women can fail to be interested in a problem so near the domestic hearth? Therefore, what more apt than to devote your little organisation to a vigorous (and in the opinion of some of us a much needed) campaign against conscription after the war?

I do not say these things *will* happen if the Chinley scheme is adopted, but I do say it would be quite in order that they should. But, it will be objected, the Council, the Central Executive, the Local Executives would never allow it. Here we reach the point in the Chinley scheme which makes its other propositions so alarming to those of us, whether belonging to large or small N.U. Societies, whose desire it is to preserve the N.U. for the uses of the women's movement, rather than for those of a women's party; who regard ourselves as the heritors and followers of Dr. Blackwell, Dr. Garrett Anderson, Mrs. Josephine Butler, Mrs. Chapman Catt rather than of a Mrs. Pankhurst. Chinley's amazing proposition is that persons in favour of poor law or prison reform or of "*a* change" (note that the nature of the change remains undefined) in the public attitude towards sex problems, may control our local and even our central Executives without any guarantee whatever that such persons believe in equal opportunity, to say nothing of freedom for women.

The Chinley scheme has some supporters who are outstanding in every quality a Suffragist most admires, but what is their answer to these things?

A. Helen Ward.

Madam,—I greatly regret that the forthcoming Council is not confining itself to the consideration of the future of the N.U.W.S.S. instead of trying to deal in three days with an Agenda containing not only alternative schemes of work, which will require careful consideration, but many other resolutions, some of which contain proposals which are highly contentious or for which the time is not yet ripe.

With regard to the future of the N.U.W.S.S. I should like to see some attempt made to bring about an amalgamation between it and the N.U.W.W. as is suggested in the resolution standing in the name of Edinburgh; possibly it would be wise for a new title to be taken so as to avoid giving the impression that one society has swallowed up the other. It seems to me that there are very few districts which will be able to maintain a Society for Women's Suffrage or Equal Rights, a branch of the N.U.W.W., and a Women Citizens' Association, but the two former might become merged in the latter.

In Oldham representatives of all the Women's Societies in the town, having any considerable membership of women, were invited by the N.U.W.W. branch to meet and form a "Joint Committee of Women's Societies." A well-attended meeting was the result, and the Joint Committee is arranging for a short series of lectures in the spring, and is considering the question of forming a Women Citizens' Association. I have been working on matters concerning women as the Hon Sec. of the Oldham branch of the N.U.W.W. since 1905, and have been President of the Oldham Society for Women's Suffrage since 1910, but I have not found any great demand amongst women for the wholesale Endowment of Maternity although many of us would wish to see more done for necessitous parents through Maternity Centres, etc., and pensions for widows.

We need to consolidate our position before making a further advance. Would it not be better to postpone the consideration of these wider questions for a special Council meeting when adequate time might be given?

Marjory Lees.

Madam,—It seems clear that the central point of interest at our coming Council meeting will be the degree of freedom or restriction to be embodied in our future constitution.

The actual verbal difference between the two schemes of reorganisation—A (the Executive's) and B (Chinley's)—are slight, Chinley's being rather more elastic; but in the final agenda the Executive asks leave to add to its object a further drastic restriction to the effect that the Union shall work *only* for sex equality—a restriction which, I believe, would prevent many members from supporting scheme A.

The prohibition of work for any reform not included under "equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women" would, in my opinion, be a mischievous hindrance to some of the best work which lies before enfranchised womanhood. It is true that the words "a *real* equality" admit of some elasticity of interpretation; but left to the discretion of a timid or hidebound majority (if such an Executive may be conceived) it might preclude us from touching such questions as the Endowment of Motherhood, the raising of the Age of Consent, Marriage Law Reform, Conscription, Military Education in our Schools, and any number of other subjects vitally affecting women and their children.

For what reason are we asked thus to shackle ourselves at the very moment when some practical power is put into our hands? For fear we may not be all of one mind!

But will any number of restrictions ensure that desirable (or *un*desirable!) uniformity? Miss Rathbone herself (with that vigorous independence of mind for which we all value her so highly) is at this very moment—more power to her elbow!—advocating certain economic heresies which are startling and disturbing to many of her fellow-suffragists, and which, under proposed new limitations, some future Executive might pronounce *ultra vires*. *She is making us all think, which is a far better thing than making us all agree.*

What is it we are afraid of? That some of our more democratic societies may desire to move in such controversial subjects as food or housing reform? Suppose our Constitution had prohibited such fields of activity at the beginning of the war, where would have been our mothercraft exhibitions, our cookery lectures, our workrooms? It is indisputable that the societies which have shown the freest activity in every direction are the ones which have maintained their vitality, while those which have rigidly "stuck to their last" have dwindled or died.

Miss Rathbone concludes her letter on "The Future of the National Union" in your last issue by declaring, apropos of W.C.A.s, "They must necessarily be autonomous, and the work done by each will depend partly on local needs and circumstances." If this is not too broad a basis for Citizens' Associations, why is it too broad for the National Union? If bodies composed of individuals comparatively new to public affairs may be trusted with autonomy, surely our trained, disciplined suffrage societies may be left the fullest freedom to shape their future lines of national service!

C. C. Osler.

Madam,—Miss Rathbone's travesty of the scheme put forward by Mrs. Thoday is so transparent that it requires no comment. Obviously there are difficulties and drawbacks inseparable from every scheme; the question before us will be which scheme offers the greatest advantages and the greatest freedom with the least disadvantages.

I recognise that the "equality formula" has much to recommend it, but may I point out certain very serious disadvantages attaching to it?:—

(1) It will be very difficult of interpretation. This point which was advanced by Mr. Armstrong in his last letter is not answered by Miss Rathbone. She would include the endowment of motherhood under an equality formula, but how many of the societies in the Union are ready to do so, and if equality can be stretched so wide, cannot it be made to shelter just as many reforms as Mrs. Thoday's scheme and so become just as controversial? If the equality formula is adopted it is quite clear that before the Union can discuss the merits of any reform it must be involved in a barren controversy as to whether or not it can be included in the terms "equality of status."

(2) The adoption of an equality formula requires the acceptance by the Union of the attainments of men as the measure of women's demands. Men and women are not working together for the great constructive reforms so urgently needed and to bring the woman's point of view to bear upon them. No, women, at least those in the N. U. are to wait until men have secured their advance and then are to run behind crying "Me, too!" Thus, for instance, in educational matters, women would be restricted to demanding the equality of girls with boys. Important, of course, but not so important as the deciding of the whole character of education for boys and girls together.

Anyone can supply a dozen other examples of the crippling character of the equality formula. To adopt it is to abandon all initiative.

(3) The demand for equality alone will not, I believe, provide adequate sustenance for N. U. societies all over the country. Everywhere women are enthusiastic about the power of the vote to secure those reforms which touch their daily lives or which make a special appeal to them as women. Confront these women with an "equality formula" and nothing else, and they will be chilled and disappointed. You will not win them for your cause. They did not want the vote only to demand women's rights, and the equality formula (which is only the old early Victorian demand in a new dress) will leave them cold. If the N.U. is to retain its societies and its membership all over the country it must adopt a scheme which will bring it into contact with the aims and enthusiasms of the great mass of thinking women.

The equality formula will mean an attenuated membership confined principally to large towns. Life and vigour will flow into other streams and will leave the N. U. on one side.

K. D. Courtney.

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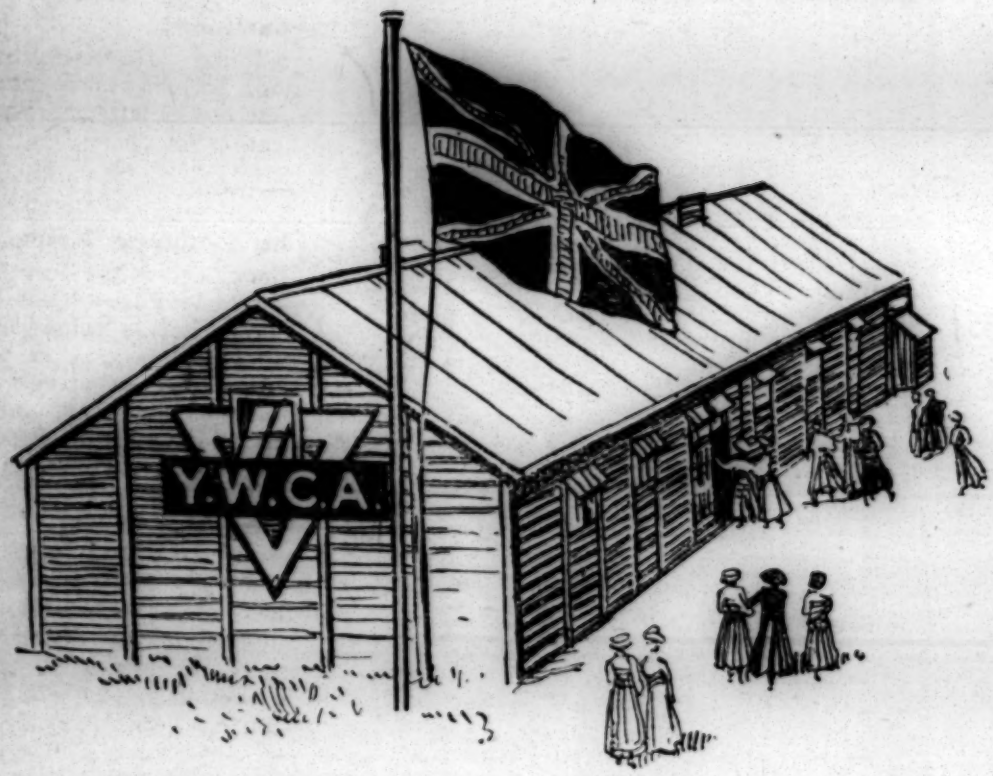

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THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL UNION.

MADAM,—Miss Rathbone's letter of March 1st emphasises the obvious difficulties of an organisation with a wide scope. They are necessarily different from those involved in a restricted basis. Whether they are greater is not so certain. It is clear to me, as a person intimately acquainted with a large section of the organisation of the N.U.W.S.S., that the "equality formula" is not sufficient of itself to inspire our present societies with life, and deadness is the greatest of all difficulties.

It is the need for women's special constitution to social reform that I desired to emphasise in my article—the need to use this great opportunity while seeking at the same time for further opportunities. It is this need which has inspired the American Women's Clubs, which, so far as an outsider can see, have deeply influenced American legislation, but which, in my mind, could not have effected what they have without a National Headquarters.

The troubles of an involved Council Agenda we have already with us, and if we organised ourselves on a wide basis as Societies of Citizens we should need to consider some especial procedure. Items not backed by more than X societies might be crowded out, or societies could ballot for the order of resolutions. After all, we should be a *political* society and not more than a few questions are practical politics in any one session.

M. G. THODAY.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORAL AND SOCIAL HYGIENE.

ANNUAL MEETING.

It is a pity that Mr. Macpherson and those Members of Parliament who saw fit to cheer his speech on the subject of *maisons tolérées* on February 25th were not present at the Caxton Hall on Friday, March 1st. Late-comers to the meeting organised by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Tarring, J.P., could not find seats either in the hall or the gallery, and the feeling shown was not only one of determined hostility to Mr. Macpherson's point of view, but, what is more important, it was well-informed hostility. Miss Royden dealt effectually with the argument that institutions of this kind are necessary for the sake of innocent women, on the one hand, and for that of the sorely-tried soldier on the other. She protested against this libel on human nature, and described a meeting of soldiers in India who, when they realised the cruelty and misery involved in this system, signed a petition to their commanding officer asking him to close the houses in the vicinity of their camp.

Dr. Orchard spoke of the necessity for greater knowledge on the subject, and the enormous importance of parents instructing their children and really facing the difficulties of such teaching.

Mr. Lees Smith, M.P., made, perhaps, the most impressive speech of the evening. He revealed the fact that questions about *maisons tolérées* had not been asked in the House until private representations extending over many months had failed. He characterised Mr. Macpherson's utterance about "clean women" as one of the most shocking and revolting sentences ever heard in the House of Commons. The presence of Mr. Chancellor, M.P., on the platform, and the message of regret from Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, are welcome evidence of the fact that Mr. Macpherson's view is not universally accepted in the House of Commons, and in reply to Mr. Williams, of the Y.M.C.A., who spoke at the end of the meeting, the Chairman said that action was contemplated by the Association, and that the matter would not be allowed to rest.

LONDON UNITS OF THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S HOSPITALS.

On Wednesday, February 20th, the first detachment of the "Elsie Inglis" Unit left for Salonica. A large party of friends assembled to see them off, including the Serbian Minister and Madame Yovanovitch, Dr. Curcin, the Hon. Mrs. Haverfield, Lady Decies, Mrs. Flinders Petrie (Hon. Secretary, London Units), and members of the office staff.

Good reports have been received both by cable and letter of the progress of the Unit, and the journey so far seems to have been a very comfortable one.

The second party left on Saturday, March 2nd, and a cable has been received reporting their safe crossing of the Channel.

The London Committee are in need of funds for the future maintenance of this Unit, which is to carry on the work on the lines planned by Dr. Inglis herself. Readers of THE COMMON CAUSE are referred to the full-page advertisement which appeared in last week's issue for further details as to the great need of support for this Unit. Cheques should be sent to Viscountess Cowdray or the Hon. Mrs. Spencer Graves (Hon. Treasurers), 66, Victoria Street, S.W. 1, and should be crossed "London County & Westminster Bank."

Notes from Headquarters.

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Food Requirements at Council.

It is important that delegates and visitors coming to the National Union Council Meetings from the Provinces should bring with them their *National Registration Cards* if they wish to secure meat, butter or margarine, and sugar. They can then sign a declaration-form at the nearest Local Food Office, if only staying four days, and can thereby obtain such food. If remaining for a longer period, they can obtain emergency food-cards.

Literature Department.

Women Citizens' Associations will find "Home and State," by Selma Lagerlöf (price 1d., postage ½d.), a useful pamphlet. The Literature Department has a few copies left, and Societies are advised to make an early application for them.

Special Number of "The Common Cause."

Secretaries of Societies and members who desire extra copies of the special number, are asked to send their orders *at once*, as, owing to paper restrictions, only a limited number of copies will be printed. The price will be 2d., or 2s. per dozen of thirteen. The price of 1d., quoted last week, *refers only to copies sent in the usual course to those who subscribe to the head office.* Orders, with postal-orders, should be addressed to the Manager, THE COMMON CAUSE, 62, Oxford Street, W. 1.

Celebration Fund.

We gratefully acknowledge the many generous donations to our Celebration Fund, and hope that the Secretaries of Societies will ask for more copies of the Appeal to circulate among their members. Or should they prefer to send lists of names and addresses to Headquarters, the Appeal can be sent direct.

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Received for the Scottish Women's Hospitals:			
Mrs. Page Wernicke		1 0	0

OUR THIRD "COMMON CAUSE" HUT.

Miss Moberley, home on a visit from our hut at Calais, tells us that it is a huge success, being crowded every evening with W.A.A.C. girls, who are allowed to bring their men friends. The men much prefer our hut, which is both pretty and comfortable, to their own. A part of the decoration which the girls particularly appreciate are the original paintings kindly sent out by some Newlyn artists.

In view of the success of the established huts, we appeal with all the more certainty of a generous response, for more gifts towards our third hut, which is to be for the W.A.A.C. on Salisbury Plain.

We are particularly touched by the donation of £8 8s. from the Watlington G.F.S., of 10s. from the Alceston Girls' School, and £20 from Mrs. Holland who has already subscribed with great generosity.

The following donations are gratefully acknowledged :—

	£	s.	d.
Already acknowledged	461	11	10
Signora Y. Maraini	2	2	0
Mrs. Fraser	1	0	0
Anonymous		5	0
Miss L. Mitchell	2	0	0
A. B.		5	0
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Miss H. C. Wardale	5	0	0
	£505	0	10

NEWS FROM IRELAND.

The Women's Political League.

The sixth annual meeting of the Belfast Suffrage Society was held on Thursday, February 28th. It was decided to change the name of the society, and henceforth it will be known as the Women's Political League; headquarters, Belfast. The objects of the society, as formerly stated, needed but slight alteration, since they included work through the power of the vote for the welfare of the country. A general outline of work was unanimously adopted, which includes the familiar questions of social and moral reform, maternity, child welfare, housing, education reform, the principle of equal pay for equal work. The W.P.L. will be non-party and non-sectarian.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN AT EDINBURGH.

A United service was held under the auspices of the various Edinburgh Suffrage Societies in the Synod Hall on February 16th. The arrangements were made by the Church Leagues for Women's Suffrage and The Edinburgh National Society of the N.U.W.S.S., the W.F.L., the C.U.W.F.A., the United Suffragists, the University Graduates W.S.S. and the Northern Men's Federation were represented. The Lord Provost was represented by Bailie White, and the other Councillors present were Messrs. Bruce Lindsay, Crawford, McMichael, and Miller.

The service consisted of the singing of the Te Deum, the 100th Psalm and two Suffrage hymns, a portion of Scripture was read by Miss Louisa Lumsden, LL.D., and special thanksgiving prayers were offered by the Rev. C. M. Black and Mrs. Shaw McLaren.

The Chairman, who addressed the audience as "fellow electors," said women had proved themselves worthy to have a voice in the affairs of the nation. He believed that the women of Germany were rejoicing that the women of Britain had secured the vote. It was a happy omen for the securing of marked success in other directions. The causes of purity and temperance and other causes touching the home life were matters to which the nation would need to address itself in order that the havoc wrought by the war might be speedily overcome and undone.

Reports from Societies.

MANCHESTER.—On February 22nd, the Manchester Society held a celebration of the passing of the Representation of the People Bill in the Women's Debating Hall at the University. A very large gathering of members met to rejoice. The printed programme contained a sketch of the development and work of the Society since 1867. Mrs. T. C. Waterhouse presided. After refreshments, talk, and music, Mrs. Waterhouse welcomed the members, urging them to continue working with the same high ideals as had inspired their past, and then asked them to pass the following resolution, to be sent to Mrs. Fawcett :—

"That this meeting of members of the Manchester Society for Women's Suffrage met together to celebrate the establishment of the principle of women's political enfranchisement, for which the Society has worked since 1867, desires to convey to their distinguished leader, Mrs. Fawcett, their heartfelt appreciation of her steadfast courage and statesmanship, and their gratitude to her for the part she has taken in laying a foundation upon which future generations of true citizens of men and women together may build up a new and happier world."

The resolution was neither seconded nor passed, for after the first few words the audience rose to its feet, and the prolonged cheering seconded and passed it in the only possible way.

Miss Burstall, Headmistress of the Girls' High School, and other speakers followed.

Mrs. Hogg, the Warden of the Women's Hall of residence, then proposed a resolution urging the desirability of establishing scholarships for women and associating them with the names of the pioneers and friends of the women's movement.

On Saturday, the 23rd, the Society joined the Church League in a service in the Cathedral, at which Canon Peter Green was to have been the preacher. He was, however, not well enough to be present. The form of service was that used at St. Martin's-in-the-Field. The suggestion of Mrs. Fawcett that the 126th Psalm seemed to have been "written for us" was passed on to the proper authorities, and the Rev. A. E. Cornibeer, who at short notice replaced Canon Green, read the Psalm in the course of his beautiful address.

About 1,000 people were present.

DARLINGTON.—On Friday, February 22nd, we united with the Church League for Women's Suffrage and had a Thanksgiving Service at St. James's Church, conducted by Rev. T. C. Gobat, M.A., who is a staunch friend of the Women's Movement.

He gave an address, and the form of thanksgiving drawn up by the Church League was used; so we gave thanks and consecrated our new powers.

CHINLEY.—An interesting meeting was held at the Café on Thursday, February 28th; Mrs. Thoday presided. Mrs. Cox gave a most instructive address on the work that had been accomplished by the Manchester Citizens' Associations. A keen discussion, in which everyone present participated, followed, and it was decided to hold a public meeting in the Church-room at the beginning of April, when officers and a committee will be elected. A resolution was passed—the casting vote being given by the Chairman—that men should be admitted. Several new members were enrolled.

North-Western Federation.

CARNFORTH W.S.S.—On Thursday, February 28th, this society convened a meeting of representatives of all women's organisations in the Carnforth district to discuss the formation of a Women Citizens' Association. A good response was made to the appeal, and an excellent representative company met at the Station Hotel.

Mrs. Cooper, of the N.U., made a straightforward and practical speech on the formation and scope of these associations.

Questions were asked, and finally it was decided to appoint a provisional committee, formed of one or two members from each organisation, but no further steps will be taken until after the council meeting.

On Thursday evening a meeting was held at Ulverston under the auspices of the Women's Co-operative Guild, assisted by the North-Western Federation. Other women's organisations in the town were invited, and there was a good attendance, Guild members predominating.

Mrs. Cooper gave an excellent address on the Franchise Bill, urging all women to use their vote and work together to bring about the reforms that were needed.

A resolution welcoming the granting of the franchise to women was passed with enthusiasm.

Forthcoming Meetings.

MARCH 8.

York—The Settlement—"Women as State Builders"—Mrs. Ring 7.30 p.m.

MARCH 11.

Walworth—Baptist Chapel Sisterhood, Walworth Road (entrance in Fowler Street)—Speaker: Miss White—Subject: "The Responsibilities of the Vote" 3 p.m.

Peckham—James Grove Mission, S.E.—Speaker: Miss Helen Downs—Subject: "The Importance of the Vote" 3 p.m.

MARCH 12.

Bristol—Barton Hill—Speaker: Mrs. W. C. H. Cross 8 p.m.

MARCH 13.

Bristol—40, Park Street—Working Party 3 to 5 p.m.

MARCH 18.

South Kensington—18, Sheffield Terrace, Campden Hill (by kind invitation of Miss Frances Sterling)—General Meeting of Members of the Branch to hear the decisions of the N.U.W.S.S. Council as to the future work of the Union and to discuss the future work of the Branch—Speaker: Mrs. Oliver Strachey 3 p.m.

MARCH 19.

W. Southwark—Webber Street Mission, Blackfriars Road, S.E.—Speaker: Mrs. Corbett Fisher, M.A.—Subject: "The Importance of the Vote" 3 p.m.

MARCH 20.

Croydon—"Women Citizens' Day" — Large Public Hall—Speakers: Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Nina Boyle 5 p.m.

MARCH 23.

Brixton—Women's Institute, Durand Gardens, S.W.—Speaker: Miss Ruth Young—Subject: "The Representation of the People Act" 8 p.m.

Coming Events.

MARCH 14th.—The Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street—Meeting convened by the Free Church League for Woman Suffrage to demand a clean peace—Speakers: A. J. Gardiner, Sir Gilbert Murray, Jerome K. Jerome, etc., etc. 8 p.m.

MARCH 20th — Croydon — "Women Citizens' Day"—Service at Croydon Parish Church 2.30 p.m.

S.W.H. MEETINGS.

MARCH 7th—British Women's Temperance Association, Co-operative Buildings, Blackburn—Lecture on the work of the S.W.H., by Miss Irene Curwen 7 p.m.

MARCH 8th—Notre Dame Convent School, Blackburn—Lantern Lecture on the work of the S.W.H. in France and Serbia, by Miss Irene Curwen 5.30 p.m.

MARCH 11th—The Town Hall, Blackburn—Lantern Lecture entitled: "Experiences on the Eastern Front and in Salonika, by Miss Vera Holme—Chairman, His Worship the Mayor 7.30 p.m.

MARCH 12th—Notre Dame Convent School, Blackburn—Lantern Lecture on the work of the S.W.H. in Roumania and Russia, by Miss Vera Holme 5.30 p.m.

LONDON UNITS, S.W.H.

MARCH 12th—At Compton Hall, Compton Road—A Lantern Lecture by the Hon. Mrs. Haverfield — Chairman: Mr. T. Raffles Hughes, K.C. 5.30 p.m.

Items of Interest.

A Club-house was opened on February 7th, for members of the Women's Farm and Garden Union, and the Women's National Land Service Corps. It is in a house adjoining the offices for both Societies, the Club number being 51, Upper Baker Street. There are a few bedrooms for the use of country members coming up to town, and should the demand justify it, additional premises will be taken to afford more sleeping accommodation. Current journals and magazines will be found in the Reading Room and a small Library of books on farm and garden subjects. Members can meet their friends at the Club or arrange business interviews there. The Club has been designed to meet a widely-felt need; it is likely to be of great value to the increasing number of educated women, working in rural districts, whose affairs necessitate occasional runs up to town. Full particulars can be obtained on application to 50, Upper Baker Street, London, N.W. 1.

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[Continued on page 628

Continued from page 627.

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